

SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
A NEW NEWS LETTER - NUMBER THREE
(AND THE LAST ONE)

JUNE 16, 1988

A FLASH REPORT ON THE 22ND ANNUAL MEETING

Nearly two hundred lay and clergy delegates from the congregations of the Southeast Conference gathered in the beautiful setting of the University of The South campus at Sewanee, Tennessee, to be "ON HOLY GROUND" with each other and with God to do some serious work for this Conference. The hours spent together were inspirational and filled with important decisions for the future. Those who were sent by the respective congregations took their representation seriously and made decisions on the basis of understanding of issues, and voted through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. How we wish that every single church member could have been there to feel the power of that Spirit moving through the group and to have come to know the mighty work being done for God through this Conference of churches and this denomination. It was awesome.

HERE ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS!

1. The delegates elected The Rev. Mr. Roger D. Knight as the fourth Conference Minister of the Southeast Conference. Rev. Knight is presently Associate Director of the Office For Church Life and Leadership of the U.C.C., with offices in Minneapolis, Min., a position he has held since June, 1976. Prior to his present position, Mr. Knight served as Associate Conference Minister with the Nebraska Conference of the U.C.C. He has also served as pastor of congregations in Wisconsin and Iowa. Roger and Beth plan to move into the Atlanta area in early September. We welcome our new leader with enthusiasm.
2. A new Constitution for the Southeast Conference was approved, with some additions to the copies mailed to each church. This document broadens the representation on the various organizations of the conference, and sets up new ways for planning to take place and decisions to be made. The new Constitution will go into effect with new elections at the 23rd Annual Meeting of Conference in 1989.
3. The delegates adopted a budget for the Southeast Conference for 1989. This was the first such budget ever presented for adoption by such delegates. It placed in the hands of those who represented congregations, the decision making on how the benevolent gifts of the congregations will be spent. The budget for 1989 is 10% higher than the recommended budget for 1988. The total figure is: \$250,070. Before voting on this budget, the delegates gathered three times to discuss its implications, the necessity for the expenditures, the need to have the congregations to support it. Delegates spoke frequently about the need to inform their congregations of the mission possibilities encompassed in this budget. WE URGE ITS

SUPPORT BY EVERY CHURCH!

4. New officers of the Conference and new Board Members were elected as follows:
Moderator, Barbara Everett, 1st U.C.C., Belvidere, Tenn.
Vice Moderator, Roy T. Bain, United, LaGrange, Ga.
Secretary, Francis Bryant, Carroll Heights, Atlanta, Ga.
Treasurer, Linda Sherrell, Pilgrim U.C.C., Chattanooga, Tenn.
Mem.-at-Large, James Fields, Pilgrim Congregational, Charleston, SC
Co-ord. Church and Ministry, Wayde Washburn, Jones Chapel, Woodbury, Ga.
Co-ord. Outreach Comm., Trudy Braun, Ch. Good Shepherd, Crossville, Tenn.
Co-ord. Comm. on Women, Mary Brueggemann, Central, Atlanta
Co-ord. Christian Edu., Herbert Young, Langdale CC, Valley, AL
Finance Com. Chair, Dan Rosemergy, Brookmeade, Nashville
Personnel Com. Chair, James L. Myers, 1st C.C., Birmingham
5. Members of the Conference Staff and Conference organizations reported on the stewardship of their time and efforts throughout the conference during the past year. It was noted that much more could be done in the way of providing leadership to the churches and programs to benefit their local ministries, if there were sufficient dollars to support such efforts.
6. The delegates passed one resolution calling for the Southeast Conference to declare itself a "Just Peace Conference," whereby we pray and work hard for peace throughout the world. This resolution was submitted by the members of the Pleasant Hill Community Church, Pleasant Hill, Tenn. Members of the drafting committee of this congregation have expressed an interest and willingness to meet with congregations and Associations as this concern is discussed and the resolution is implemented. God calls us to a peaceful world. We have a responsibility for making it so. A copy of the resolution will be included in the minutes of the Annual Meeting which will be mailed to every church in the near future.
7. We called out "two of our own" and commissioned them for service to the Reformed Church of France where they will be fraternal partners with that communion and the United Church Board For World Ministries. The Rev. Joyce Myers Brown and the Rev. Edward Brown will soon be leaving the shores of America for Arras, France where they will spend a year as ministers to congregations in the Mining Basin of Northern France.
8. The Spiritual Life Task Group of the Conference introduced three youth, two lay men, and five lay women as persons nominated by their respective congregations for special recognition as outstanding persons in the mission of the local church. From among these, the following were chosen to receive awards of honor for their work:

YOUNG PERSONS

KEITH ARNETT,
ANGELA MATHEWS,

ATLANTA, U.C.C.
LANGDALE CONG. CHRISTIAN

LAYMEN

DR. RICHARD BRAUN, CHURCH OF GOOD SHEPHERD, CROSSVILLE
J. MASON DAVIS, EXQ., 1ST CONGREGATIONAL, BIRMINGHAM

LAYWOMEN

MS. ARIEL FORD, ATLANTA, U.C.C.
MS. AUGUSTA PETTIE, 1ST CONGREGATIONAL, SAVANNAH, GA

9. Eighteen clergy were recognized for many years of service since their Ordination. Pastors celebrating significant anniversaries were awarded certificates of appreciation by the Moderator and Interim Conference Minister. Four clergy are celebrating the 60th year of their ordination this summer. They are:

Rev. Carl R. Dille
Rev. R. F. Ensminger
Rev. Joe A. French
Rev. Ralph L. Krout

10. Certificates of recognition were given to congregations whose members made contributions to the CHURCH BUILDERS CLUB during the past year. Plaques were presented to six congregations which had 100% of the members participating in this program. That is, each member purchased at least one share in the CHURCH BUILDERS CLUB, at the rate of \$5.00 per share. Those receiving plaques were:

Trinity U.C.C., Jonesboro, Ga.
Fairfield Glade Community Church, Fairfield Glade, Tenn.
The United Church, Huntville, Ala.
First U.C.C., Belvidere, Tenn.
First Congregational Christian, Roanoke, Ala.
Columbus United, Columbus, Ga.

11. Horace and Louise Sills were overwhelmed when they were presented a letter of appreciation for work as Interim Conference Minister, and two tickets to England so they can visit their son whose company transferred him to London while the Sills' have been in the Southeast. It was a very moving experience.

12. The closing worship was a beautiful "Holy Ground" experience. There was much to celebrate. The new Conference Minister preached the sermon, and we broke bread together in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. GOD HAD LED US ON A JOURNEY TOGETHER. AND TOGETHER WE WILL CONTINUE TO CELEBRATE THE HOLY GROUND OF OUR MISSION.

THE CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Immediately following the adjournment of the Annual Meeting, the Board of Directors, including newly elected persons, met to set the tone and direction for tomorrow. Newly elected Moderator, Barbara

Everett, welcomed all new people and turned the meeting toward the futuring hopes of everyone. Although the Board had much to celebrate and hopes to enumerate, there was also present the reality that Conference funds are very short. The Directors considered an analysis of the financial picture which had been prepared by the Interim Conference Minister. Following that presentation and general conversation, it was voted to appoint a CRISIS STRATEGY TASK GROUP to begin work immediately on ways to improve the financial situation in the Conference. The Board also directed the Interim Conference Minister to "inform the churches of the Southeast Conference of the serious financial Crisis confronting all of us and to request their urgent consideration of the strategies developed by a Crisis Strategy Task Group."

The Southeast Conference needs the support of every congregation and every church member. There is an important mission to perform through this Conference, but it cannot be done adequately unless there are sufficient funds to pay the costs involved. This Conference is at the beginning of a new day of opportunities and new needs requiring our witness are rising rapidly before us every day. WE NEED YOUR HELP AND YOUR SUPPORT. The Crisis Strategy Task Group, appointed by the Board of Directors, will meet on June 22, to design a plan to reach every congregation and every church member with information on our need, and to consider every possible way to raise the funds necessary for this mission and/or lower the expenditure side of the budget. To lower the budget by very much will cut sharply into services and programs designed to assist congregations, but that will have to be done unless new dollars can be found.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION HELPS

Churches should retain the following telephone number and use it when ordering Church School Literature or when there is a question about the new literature, DISCIPLESHIP ALIVE and BIBLE DISCOVERY. The toll free number is: 1-800-537-3394. This will reach a consultant who will help with your order or questions. Customer service personnel may be reached by asking for extension, 391 or 392 or 393.

OAK GROVE COUNTRY FAIR SCHOLARSHIP

The Oak Grove Country Fair, an auxiliary of the Oak Grove United Congregational Christian Church, Pine Mountain, has established a scholarship at LaGrange College. In accepting the first check, Dr. Walter Y. Murphy, President of the college said: "We are extremely pleased that the Oak Grove Country Fair and those engaged in this worthwhile project have linked themselves with LaGrange College by establishing this scholarship for deserving persons to pursue a college career and become more useful citizens. No more worthwhile investment could be made by community-minded citizens than in the lives of young people of the Oak Grove Community who will carry on traditions of service to humankind by entering the ministry or the field of nursing. LaGrange College is grateful to join hands with the Oak Grove Country Fair in this noble endeavor." Dr. Frederick Mills is pastor of Oak Grove United. Congratulations!

IN THE ECUMENICAL SPIRIT

We extend congratulations to the Rev. L. Floyd Carmack, pastor of Trinity United Church, Jonesboro, Ga., on being elected President of the Georgia Christian Council. Rev. Carmack became the highest ranking officer of this state wide ecumenical agency during the recent annual meeting of the organization in Atlanta. The Georgia Christian Council is very diverse theologically, but its members are "bonded together by a single mission...Ecumenism in Georgia."

AND JUST A LITTLE HUMOR

Just before she started her sabbatical and the beginning of her mission in France, The Rev. Joyce Myers-Brown presented the office staff with a cartoon entitled, "The Lite Church." It is worth sharing with everyone. It depicts a church with a large outdoor sign with the words: "The Lite Church: 24% fewer commitments, home of the 7.5% tithe, 15 minute sermons, 45 minute worship services. We have only 8 Commandments - your choice. We use just 3 spiritual laws. Everything you wanted in a church.. and less." Know any churches like that?

THE WORLD FAMOUS SOUTHEAST NEWS - UPDATE

Everyone remembers the World Famous Southeast News for which we were in dire need of an editor. Well, WE NOW HAVE AN EDITOR WHO TOOK THE JOB EVEN THOUGH WE DON'T PAY ANYTHING FOR IT. He is the Rev. Mr. Mark Cole, pastor of Pilgrimage U.C.C., Marietta. We hope to begin publication of this important communications paper very soon. We have not been able to do that before because we had to get some duplicating machinery fixed so we could produce it. That machinery is in working order now and we hope to get a new issue out next month. This "New News Letter, #3 will have to suffice until then.

AND NOW A FAREWELL

Horace S. Sills, Interim Conference Minister of the Southeast Conference since January 20, 1988, is preparing to bring this ministry to a close. He and Louise will leave the Southeast Conference during the third week in July to return to their home in Harrisburg, Pa. Horace reports that the months spent in the Southeast Conference have been very rewarding to them personally as many new friends have been made and many old friendships have been reestablished.

Most of the tasks assigned to Horace by the Board of Directors have been accomplished or are well on the way to accomplishment. He believes the future mission of this Conference is very important to the entire church. Although there are some concerns about financing that mission, it is believed the churches will meet this need, and more, as you move forward under the leadership of the Rev. Mr. Roger Knight. Sills stated, "Louise and I will always remember the strong support given to us during this interim ministry. We will keep the needs of the churches of the Southeast Conference in our prayers to God, and we will ask special blessings to be showered upon your leadership. If every church recognizes it's relationship to the Conference, accepts it's share of the mission, understands it's covenant as coming from

Almighty God Himself, the work will get done and thousands will be brought closer to our Lord because of it. May God be with all of you!"

The Rev. Mr. Knight expects to begin his new work in early September. The Board of Directors has named the Rev. Mr. Warren Blankenhorn, Associate Conference Minister, as Acting Conference Minister during the time of Silis' leaving and Knight's arrival. Please refer any questions about the Conference mission or program to Warren after July 20.